

Eye exams do more than check your vision



They can also be good for your overall health

Even with good eyesight, regular eye exams help keep your eyes healthy and catch other health conditions early. These conditions can include:¹

- **Glaucoma.** Pressure in the eye, which can harm the optic nerve.
- **Macular degeneration.** Changes in the retina that result in the slow loss of eyesight.
- **Cataracts.** Clouding in the eye lens, which can blur vision.
- **High blood pressure.**² Also known as hypertension and happens when the force of blood against artery walls is consistently too high.
- **Certain cancers.**² Cancers can include eye melanoma (in the cells of the eye) and brain tumors.
- **Diabetes.**² The body doesn't manage insulin (a hormone that turns sugar into energy) the right way, causing insulin resistance and leading to higher-than-normal blood sugar levels.

Preventive vision care for every age, at every stage

- **Infants and toddlers.** Make sure your child's eyes are screened during regular checkups with the pediatrician.
- **Children and teens.** Vision screenings with a pediatrician or eye doctor are recommended every 1 to 2 years.
- **Adults.** Adults should have a complete eye exam every year. At age 40, in addition to the standard exam, get a baseline eye disease screening. You may need extra visits if you develop any eye conditions as you age.



The effect of diabetes on your eyes

One in four people with diabetes don't know they have it,³ so they don't receive the treatment and protection they need. **Sixty percent of people with diabetes** also don't receive a yearly eye exam,⁴ putting their vision at risk.

Diabetes can also make your eyes sensitive to light and damage the retina, which is called diabetic retinopathy.

Proper vision care can stop more than 90% of vision loss and blindness caused by diabetic retinopathy, making regular eye exams even more important for people with diabetes.⁵



4 things you can do for your eyes

- 1. Have a complete eye exam every year.** This may include dilation, where the pupil is dilated or made bigger, so the retina can be checked for signs of eye disease and other health conditions.
- 2. Protect your eyes from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays.** Over time, the sun's UV rays can damage eyesight through cataracts and age-related macular degeneration. UV rays can also cause skin cancer around the eyelid or a sunburn on the eye surface.
 - Wear sunglasses that block 100% of UV rays, even on cloudy days.
 - Choose contact lenses that filter out UV rays or Transitions® lenses for your glasses, which are regular lenses indoors but turn as dark as sunglasses outdoors. They block 100% of UVA and UVB rays. Covered dependents under age 19 can get them at no cost.
- 3. Shield your eyes from everyday bright light and glare.** They can make it harder to see and end up straining and tiring your eyes. If you wear glasses, choose lenses that automatically adjust the tint based on the light around you. You can also move lamps, TVs, and computer screens around to reduce glare.
- 4. Eat your fruits and vegetables.** They can help keep your eyes healthy and lower your risk of eye disease.⁶
 - **Orange-colored vegetables and fruits contain vitamin A.** Without enough vitamin A, your eyes can't stay moist. Choose carrots, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe, and apricots.
 - **Fruits and vegetables with vitamin C have antioxidants.** They can help prevent or delay age-related macular degeneration and cataracts. Choose citrus fruits, red bell peppers, and tomatoes.
 - **Leafy green vegetables also support your eye health.** The antioxidants in leafy green vegetables help the macula, the part of the eye that provides our most detailed vision. Choose kale, romaine, broccoli, and peas.



Make time for a vision checkup

Eye exams can be as important for your overall health as they are for the health of your eyes. If it's been more than a year since your last vision exam, schedule one today. To find an eye doctor in your plan's network, use the Find Care feature in the SydneySM Health app or at [anthem.com](https://www.anthem.com).

¹ National Eye Institute: [nei.nih.gov](https://www.nei.nih.gov).

² American Academy of Ophthalmology: *20 Surprising Health Problems an Eye Exam Can Catch* (April 29, 2022): [aaaopt.org](https://www.aaopt.org).

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *The Facts, Stats, and Impacts of Diabetes* (November 29, 2023): [cdc.gov/diabetes](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes).

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *How to Promote Eye Health for People With Diabetes* (March 3, 2022): [cdc.gov/diabetes](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes).

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Keep an Eye on Your Vision Health* (October 1, 2020): [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

⁶ American Academy of Ophthalmology: *36 Fabulous Foods to Boost Eye Health* (April 7, 2023): [aaaopt.org](https://www.aaopt.org).

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